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Wednesday, 14 October 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Ms. Jorge
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Cabezas Reveco
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Ms. Gharbi
	Jordan	Mr. Al-Moumani
	Lithuania	Ms. Birštunaitė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Nigeria	Mr. Haidara
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Jobbins
	United States of America	Ms. Lee
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Ms. Chan

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2015/716)

Letter dated 1 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/749)

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to remind all speakers to kindly limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber in order for us to work more efficiently. I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that the interpreters can do their work properly.

I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): At the outset, let me thank President Rajoy Brey and Spain for taking the lead in organizing this open debate, marking 15 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General and his dedicated staff for their efforts in making a difference for women and girls in conflict situations.

Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union.

In its national capacity, Austria commends the extensive review exercises that have been carried out in parallel, on the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), involving the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, United Nations peace operations and the women, peace and security agenda. We welcome the launch of the global study that was made public earlier today and which Austria has supported from its inception. This exercise was not only necessary in terms of taking stock, but it also provides us with important lessons learned.

Austria is alarmed by the current spread of brutal and systemic violence, which is not only causing unspeakable suffering to civilian populations, but has also triggered the biggest wave of refugees and displacement in recent history. We must develop answers on how to deal with the growing spread of violent terrorism and extremism, which are marked by unprecedented levels of sexual violence, abuse, and violations of women's and girls' rights. The perpetrators must be held accountable for their acts before the International Criminal Court. We must also empower and support the work of women activists and women human rights defenders. Therefore, a conference in Austria in June 2016 will bring together local women leaders with political representatives and discuss ways forward in tackling sexual violence in armed conflict.

Austria believes that a dedicated body on the Security Council and regular briefings on matters related to resolution 1325 (2000) would increase the Council's capacities to take timely and consistent action. Gender expertise, at adequate levels, needs to be included as well into all peace and security related work of the United Nations. We also need champions that take the lead. Austria would therefore support the idea of reviving a women leaders network and would be ready to work together with other interested Member States in this endeavour.

Austria would like to use this occasion to join other Member States in pledging support to women, peace and security. These are the following pledges.

We are committed to completing a review of the Austrian national action plan, originally dating from 2007, by the end of 2016 — with the broad participation of civil society and women's organizations — which will reflect findings of the United Nations high-level review. Our inter-ministerial working group on resolution 1325 (2000), which was established under the national action plan and works with civil society and women's organizations, will organize at least one big public event per year.

Together with other interested Member States, Austria will continue to work on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent relevant resolutions in all regional organizations. In that respect, Austria, together with Finland, Turkey and Kazakhstan, will continue to push for the adoption of an action plan on women and peace and security by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as many other international organizations have done before. We call on the Russian Federation to join in that endeavour. It would be a timely deliverable for the OSCE ministerial meeting in December in Belgrade.

Austria supports the work of UN-Women and will continue, on a voluntary basis, to support its activities in the field of women and peace and security. Austria commits to realizing concrete results at the policy level by earmarking at least 15 per cent of all our peacebuilding spending by our development assistance agency, Austrian Development Cooperation, for programmes and projects aimed at furthering women's empowerment and gender equality.

Civil society efforts are also a critical element for the effective implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security. Austria, through its

Development Cooperation, will spend more than €1 million in the next 3 years on its cooperation with civil society activists in that field.

Austria will also follow up on the recommendations developed at the symposium entitled "Enhancing Women's Share in Peace and Security", held in November 2014 in Vienna.

Austria commits to intensifying efforts to achieve the goal of a 10 per cent proportion of female soldiers within the Austrian Armed Forces and to creating the organizational structures needed for the institutionalized integration of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment within the Ministry of Defence and the Austrian armed services.

Finally, Austria will continue to further strengthen its training activities on resolution 1325 (2000), in particular in pre-deployment training for peace and humanitarian operations, which is now provided for civilian and military experts from around the world in Austria, as well as in its national training courses.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Joyini (South Africa): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his statement, as well as to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her insightful contributions, and to Ms. Yanar Mohammed, President of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), which drew attention to the effects of armed conflict on women and girls. The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was highly significant because it gave impetus to South Africa's international commitments to gender equality. That resolution was the first to provide women with the space to participate and voice their opinion on peace and security issues.

Our own history has taught us about the influential role that women can play in a post-conflict setting. South African women represent a commanding constituency and have been at the forefront of driving reform, developing and advancing responsive policies and legislation across all sectors of Government and the private sector. Today, at the level of political decision-making, 42 per cent of South Africa's representatives in Parliament are women.

South Africa is also encouraged by the progress made at the African Union (AU) level and the commitment made there to gender mainstreaming, and we further commend the development and adoption of the AU Gender Training Manual for AU Peace Support Operations. There is no doubt that the empowerment of women will have a long, lasting and positive impact on the overall protection of vulnerable groups affected by conflicts. Allow me to outline five core areas that my delegation views as priorities.

First, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent related resolutions as the building blocks for advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We would like to encourage the strengthening of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), given the complex and dynamic nature of conflict, which has changed the character of peacekeeping and peacebuilding practices.

Secondly, at the heart of the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) is the need to address sexual violence in conflict, which is an integral aspect of the overall women and peace and security agenda. Member States have the primary responsibility to put an end to impunity and to prosecute perpetrators responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls. South Africa appreciates the active role and full participation by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict in monitoring implementation. As stated before, my delegation would like to encourage the Security Council to develop a broader framework of prevention, for example by explicitly referencing sexual violence in conflict in all relevant country-specific resolutions.

Thirdly, access to justice for women in conflict and post-conflict settings through conscious policies is essential to the building of fair, equitable and equal societies. Women suffer disproportionately from poverty, and the risks that they face are heightened in armed conflict and post-conflict settings. The legal framework to address issues of discrimination against women with respect to land ownership and other fields should be strengthened in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Access to development, economic opportunity,

employment, education and health care is an essential component of gender-responsive peacebuilding.

Fourthly, it is also important to emphasize that women should be involved in every phase of the peace and security agenda, including being provided with a greater role in preventive diplomacy, formal peace processes and mediation. We believe that promoting the role of women in the mediation of conflict will strengthen the potential to find sustainable solutions to conflict that cover a wider range of interests, especially those of women and children, whose interests are not sufficiently reflected in outcomes. We therefore support the inclusion of a clear component stressing women's participation in the terms of reference of mediation and peacebuilding processes.

My fifth and last point is that good practices, challenges and lessons learned must be documented by all stakeholders. It is also of critical importance to secure State-level and political buy-in and commitment in the form of financial and human resources. The collection of statistics and data is pertinent to developing policies that are inclusive of women and responsive to women's needs. That will, no doubt, ensure contributions to the already existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with regard to resolution 1325 (2000). A mentoring and coaching mechanism for women must also be established as a support mechanism. Mentoring is critical in sharing experiences and therefore ensures that new recruits mature in the process.

While there is value in developing monitoring mechanisms for the Security Council to ensure the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant resolutions, the greater participation of women in negotiation and peacemaking processes will allow for the greater incorporation of gender perspectives and the concerns of women, thereby contributing to the sustainability of peace and security efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): I am greatly honoured to address the Security Council at this meeting convened to mark the 15 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and to express my gratitude to Spain and personally to you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. This is an opportunity to review the implementation of the resolution over the past 15 years, but it also a chance to see what still remains to be done and how we can better deliver in the future. In that regard, we welcome the recommendations of the global study on women and peace and security, as well as the report of the Secretary-General on the issue (S/2015/716). In my statement, I shall outline some of the most important experiences of the Republic of Serbia in implementing the resolution.

Based on its firm commitment to the goals and objectives of the resolution, in 2010, my country adopted a national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security in the Republic of Serbia over the period 2010-2015. Its seven chapters, encompassing seven general goals, 15 specific goals and 106 activities, have been successfully implemented over the past five years. The action plan established a structure of gender-equality institutions and mechanisms, such as the Government's political council, the governmental multisector coordination body, the National Assembly Committee on Gender Equality, analytical groups and research teams, counsellors and ministers/directors for gender equality, which have been established, for the time being, only within the defence and security system. It also established a colleague-assistance mechanism, called a "person of trust". The structure incorporated the standards of the United Nations, European Union and NATO Partnership for Peace programme in the field of gender equality.

Along with the progress made in building a more democratic society and in protecting human rights, a significant step towards laying the foundation for a better and more humane and secure future for women has been made in the field of gender equality as well. The action plan is currently being evaluated, and the extension of its implementation in the coming mid-term period, 2016-2020, is being considered.

Figures show clearly the progress achieved. Compared to 2010, when women made up 27.4 per cent of the defence and security system in the Republic of Serbia, in 2015, women now account for 31.47 per cent. Women held 14.47 per cent of the management/command positions in 2010, whereas in 2015, that percentage has risen to 19.68 per cent. More so than in administrative positions, the percentage increase tended to occur in operational positions — the so-called women-in-uniform posts in the military, police and the customs and correctional services. In addition, women make up 10.06 per cent of the total staff complement of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior and Serbia's

armed forces deployed in 11 multinational operations. Seven of those operations are under United Nations auspices.

In order to further the normative and effective protection of women, in particular protection against violence in partnership and family relations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media and other stakeholders have instituted a number of projects aimed at taking preventive measures to reduce violence against women and children. Projects have also been devised in the field of education, both by the Government and by civil society, and are being implemented in Serbia and the region. My country has maintained intensive cooperation with international actors, including UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme/South-Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, NATO, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Two years ago, the 2014 Swiss and 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanships identified gender equality as one of their priorities in the joint workplan for their consecutive Chairmanships. In June 2014, the first-ever OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference took stock of progress in the implementation of the 2004 OSCE General Action Plan, as well as a number of follow-up Ministerial Council decisions. It identified implementation gaps, challenges and lessons learned since the adoption of the Action Plan in 2004. The current Serbian OSCE chairmanship is working on the adoption of an addendum to the Action Plan at the meeting of the Ministerial Council in Belgrade, in December, in order to update the Gender Action Plan and operationalize the recommendations developed during the 2014 Gender Review Conference. Over the past decade, the OSCE has made important strides in implementing measures to achieve gender equality in its policies and programmes, including in the political-military dimension. That development goes hand in hand with a steadily growing global awareness of the importance of the women and peace and security agenda.

The Serbian OSCE Chairmanship is committed to strengthening the role of women in peace and security by building on the many efforts already undertaken by OSCE participating States and the OSCE executive structures. However, multiple challenges still lie ahead, and considerable efforts will have to be invested at the global, regional and local levels in order to make much more effective progress than has been made so far.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): First, I would like to compliment the President and his great country, Spain, for organizing this important debate on women and peace and security on the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his statement, and the briefers for their insights.

Nepal has been closely engaged in the Council's work on women and peace and security from its inception, and has remained true to its commitments to the cause, both at home and globally. Nepal has been implementing resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) through a dedicated national action plan and with appropriate mechanisms at the local, district, and national levels. As the first such effort in South Asia, our action plan was the product of a transparent, inclusive and nationwide consultations process. It is now a central instrument articulating the country's programmes on women and peace and security.

Nepal recognizes the close link between United Nations peacekeeping operations and resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions. As a leading and consistent troop- and police-contributor, Nepal is committed to increasing the number of women in its army and police forces, deploying more women to peacekeeping, and integrating the protection of women and girls from sexual violence into predeployment training courses. The tools and training developed with the national action plan partners for the army, police and other Government stakeholders have proved useful. The security agencies are implementing a zero-tolerance policy against gender-based discrimination within their institutions, using tools such as gender-behaviour directives and directives regarding women in the military. We welcome the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. It resonates with the action plan on gender-based violence that Nepal has been implementing since 2010.

Our Prime Minister's Office has a dedicated unit for addressing sexual and gender-based violence, which provides protection to victims and brings perpetrators to justice. In over 50 districts now, women and girls service centres investigate and address such incidents. The Gender Equality Act of 2006, together with the

amendment of 56 laws identified as being gender-discriminatory, has expedited meaningful reforms in the country. Under our laws, sexual violence is a serious crime against human rights. Rape and violence against women are serious offenses against the State. Polygamy, child marriage, forced marriage, sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as sexual and domestic violence, are punishable by law. Nepal was careful to ensure that its peace process was gender-inclusive. Women comprised 33 per cent of district peace committees, set up to address local post-conflict issues by, inter alia, providing relief to victims of conflict. The current transitional justice mechanism investigates conflict-era cases and addresses the needs of the victims.

After eight years of consultations, an inclusive and democratic Constitution, written by elected representatives, was promulgated in Nepal last month. It has brought our home-grown peace process to its logical conclusion and has ushered in an era of promise for peace, progress and prosperity. The Constitution is extraordinarily progressive, especially in empowering women through representation. At least one third of the members of the federal Parliament must be women. No two persons of the same gender or community may, at any given time, occupy the elected offices of President and Vice-President. Similarly, the offices of either the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker of the Lower House and the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Upper House must be held by women. That spirit, which is reflected in the Constitution, will be instrumental in our efforts to undertake further steps towards the greater empowerment and participation of women. The Constitution has institutionalized many of our achievements in the past and inspires many more.

Much still remains to be done, though. Despite formidable challenges, including the devastation caused by earthquakes earlier this year, we are committed to integrating the national action plan into our mainstream development plan, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also want to further localize the action plan for the benefit of the people on the ground. Likewise, we are committed to ensuring that all victims of sexual violence have access to justice as well as to relief benefits and support services. We also want to emphasize gender mainstreaming in our recovery, relief and rehabilitation efforts so as to align the implementation of national action plans with the gender-specific recommendations of the various treaty bodies and mechanisms and to engage more men and boys in our campaign to oppose violence against women at all times.

To conclude, in Nepal we are convinced that much can be accomplished with our own efforts and with the support of the international community. With sustained and enhanced levels of joint funding and other means of implementation in place, Nepal will continue to make meaningful progress.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Nguyen (Viet Nam): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

ASEAN commends the Spanish presidency of the Council for convening this high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2015/716) and the Executive Director of UN-Women for her insightful briefing. This high-level review provides us with an opportunity to look back at the past 15 years, and more importantly, to map out how the important agenda of women and peace and security can be brought forward in a more forceful and effective manner.

Although much progress has been made in key aspects of the implementation of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent relevant resolutions, gaps in their implementation still need to be addressed, even as we tackle new challenges. Indeed, today's security environment differs dramatically from that of 15 years ago. ASEAN is deeply concerned by the unprecedented threats posed by the wars and conflicts ravaging many States and regions, the rise of violent extremism and the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons. We are particularly alarmed by the horrendous phenomenon of widespread sexual violence committed against women and girls.

Those challenges, new and old, necessitate a stronger commitment and more determined and coordinated actions from the international community. ASEAN believes that the women and peace and security agenda must be placed within the broader framework of conflict prevention and resolution. As highlighted in the global study, as well as in the review of United Nations

peace operations, prevention is key in all contexts. The Charter of the United Nations and international law provide a crucial framework for conflict prevention and resolution. Respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter, as well as for the fundamental principles of international law, is critical. In that context, special emphasis must be placed on respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, on refraining from the threat of or use of force and on the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

Women have an important role to play in that regard and must be empowered to play an active role in conflict resolution and peace processes. As reaffirmed in the global study, the meaningful participation of women, particularly in decision-making, will enable early conflict prevention, sustainable peace and strong post-conflict recovery and resilience. It is essential to mainstream gender-sensitive approaches in efforts to promote more inclusive and effective responses to conflicts and emergencies.

ASEAN is gravely troubled by the violation of the rights of women and girls in conflicts and when they fall victim to extremist non-State actors. We particularly deplore sexual violence against women and girls, especially when it is deployed as a tactic of war. Women and girls in conflicts are also being deprived of their most basic needs, including shelter, food, water and health care. We call on the United Nations and the international community to take immediate action to end all acts of conflict-related sexual violence and to provide protection and support to women and girls in conflicts.

Most importantly, we believe that it is vital to address the root causes that give rise to violence and conflict, such as poverty, inequality and injustice. Women have an indispensable role to play in building inclusive and peaceful societies. ASEAN therefore calls for the full and effective implementation of the inspiring, universal and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), recognizing its strong interlinkages with the women and peace and security agenda.

Regional organizations play an essential role in implementing global obligations and commitments to better protect women and girls from sexual violence, discrimination and social exclusion and to promote the role of women in conflict resolution and peace processes, including by supporting their member States in their efforts to do so. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation held a workshop in March in Cebu City, the Philippines, to strengthen women's participation in peace processes and conflict resolution. The workshop aimed at highlighting the level of women's participation in peace processes and conflict resolution in the region and at raising awareness of resolution 1325 (2000) and existing national action plans on women and peace and security.

As we move towards an ASEAN Community, ASEAN members are determined to strengthen the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. We believe that the best way to implement the women and peace and security agenda is to protect and promote women's rights, empower women and increase their involvement in all economic development and political processes, particularly in decision-making positions. ASEAN is also working hard with partners to ensure that the South-East Asia region remains one of peace, security, stability and prosperity. ASEAN stands ready and is strongly committed to joining efforts with other Member States, the United Nations and other regional organizations to safeguard the rights of women and girls and empower women in conflict prevention and resolution.

Before I conclude, I would like to emphasize, in my national capacity, that Viet Nam remains committed to addressing the issue of women and peace and security. We are pleased to have been able to introduce and facilitate the adoption of resolution 1889 (2009) under that agenda item. While the protection of and support for women as victims are essential, Viet Nam strongly believes in the value that women can bring and the contributions they can make to conflict prevention and resolution and to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mrs. Boura (Greece): I would like to thank the Spanish presidency of the Council for taking the initiative to organize this important debate on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and the high-level review of its implementation.

Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union and

wishes to add the following from a national point of view.

Over the past 15 years, there have been seven Security Council resolutions demonstrating the international commitment to the principles of the protection, prevention, participation of women and gender mainstreaming. Yet, despite progress at the normative level, 15 years after the establishment of the women and peace and security agenda, women continue to remain largely excluded from peace, security and political processes, and women leaders and human rights defenders are still being targeted.

We particularly welcome the adoption of resolution 2242 (2015), which we have proudly co-sponsored. The high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will provide a road map to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and to address new challenges, such as the rise in violent extremism, the humanitarian crises and the growing refugee and migration flows.

However, as many others have stated earlier in this meeting, much more needs to be done to translate normative progress into results on the ground. We should strive to change the traditional conceptual framework in which security tends to be a man's narrative. The recognition of the fact that women's participation in all peace and security efforts offers important advantages is crucial for achieving progress on the issue. Gender-inclusive peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding can contribute effectively to the maintenance of international peace and security. Women need to be included in the decision-making at all stages of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation processes.

Greece is strongly committed to actively promoting, in law and in practice, women's participation in peacebuilding and mediation efforts. It is our priority to tackle the underrepresentation of women in political decision-making with a view to attaining a more balanced participation of women and men in all institutions, including the military and the police. In that context, we have been in close dialogue with civil society concerning the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations in order to promote women's leadership in all relevant initiatives.

The major priorities have been incorporated into our national programme of action for substantive gender equality, which covers a wide range of public policies at the national and regional levels aimed at empowering women and girls and promoting their participation in all areas of policy on an equal basis. The national programme of action focuses on specific actions targeting thematic areas, where women and girls are either underrepresented or primarily affected, such as violence, employment and decision-making.

In the light of the national programme of action, the Greek General Secretariat for Gender Equality monitors all national policies at the governmental, regional and local levels and assesses their impact on gender by rating their results. The follow-up and evaluation of such policies will be based on statistical data and the development of gender indicators according to United Nations and European Union criteria. A range of eight strategic priorities will guide the structural funds for gender equality, which are especially aimed at the protection of women against the economic crisis, unemployment, poverty and exclusion.

Today, 15 years after Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and 20 years after the Beijing Declaration, we sincerely hope that we can fulfil the expectations to redouble our efforts for gender equality. Women's role is critical for resolving conflicts, fostering peace and promoting reconciliation. No society can achieve peace if half of its population is left behind.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Ms. Hrdá (Czech Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like first of all to thank the Spanish Presidency for organizing this debate, which is so important to all of us here today. For there to be more than 110 names on the list speaks for itself. I would also like to thank all those who participated in the preparatory process.

(*spoke in English*)

Resolution 1325 (2000) was definitely a visionary document, which perfectly recognized the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peace negotiations, in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, in humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. We have before us, 15 years after its adoption, a global study on its implementation that shows remarkable progress according to specific indicators and identifies gaps to be filled, emerging trends and priorities for action.

The Czech Republic takes the agenda in resolution 1325 (2000) very seriously, and we have tried hard to

implement it, both nationally and internationally. At the national level, our Government recently approved its first long-term framework document for gender equality, and the Czech Ministry of Defence adopted an action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000), which will require a considerable effort on the part of the Ministry, both to meet its obligations pursuant to the resolution and to inform experts from the public and the organizations concerned about the measures adopted to implement the resolution.

Internationally, the Czech Republic became the lead nation of a programme requested as part of a partnership for cooperation in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), with a focus on training female Jordanian soldiers in explosive ordnance disposal. In more general terms, the Czech Republic seeks to strengthen women's position in society through development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The goal is enshrined in our strategy of multilateral foreign development cooperation, and in fulfilling those priorities we cooperate with the relevant United Nations agencies, in particular UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. In the field of humanitarian aid, we pay special attention to the victims of gender-based violence.

Gender perspective continues to be taken into account also as a cross-cutting target within projects in countries such as Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Syria and Ukraine. In addition to traditional means of foreign policy, the Czech Republic uses a financial instrument aimed at supporting democracy and human rights, the so-called transition promotion programme, which makes use of our recent experiences with the social transition and democratization of the country. Gender mainstreaming belongs to the cross-cutting principle reflected in that programme.

In recent years, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, we have implemented a number of projects in more than seven countries, including Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Palestine and Egypt, focused especially on protecting women's rights and on enhancing their participation in public life. The study comprehensively demonstrates that the participation of women at all levels is the key to the operational effectiveness, success and sustainability of peace-process, peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts. That is one of the reasons why the Czech Republic has negotiated several times in Geneva a resolution on equal political participation that urges all States to eliminate the barriers that limit the full and effective participation of all segments of society, including women, in political affairs. The resolution has always been adopted by consensus and sponsored by a large number of countries.

I look forward to the day when resolutions such as 1325 (2000) and others concerning equal participation, which have been so widely recognized and supported, will become obsolete because all their principles have been fully and globally implemented and are, of course, fully respected.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): I thank you, Mr. President, and Spain for convening this important meeting and for ensuring that we all stay engaged in our goal of achieving the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for having facilitated the comprehensive global study on the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000). As others have already underlined, it provides an excellent overview of gaps and challenges, emerging trends and proposed priorities.

Denmark remains as committed as ever to implementing resolution 1325 (2000). Denmark was among the first countries to formulate a national action plan for implementing the resolution, and last year we adopted our third national action plan, for the period 2014-2019. We emphasize using the untapped potential of women. We seek to involve women actively, on an equal basis, in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, in humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. We commit to concrete actions in order to achieve those ends.

It is widely acknowledged that the absence of women from early peace negotiations and reconstruction measures can have a long-lasting negative impact on the development of good governance. No society can afford the luxury of excluding half of their population from decision-making processes. Therefore, the Security Council must send a strong message in support of women's political participation in the peace and development processes for the benefit of all women

and men. In that regard, we applaud the adoption yesterday of resolution 2242 (2015). As described in the global study, progress has been made and should be recognized. The incorporation of gender perspectives into peace processes is emerging, although too slowly. All countries must develop national action plans.

The root causes of war and conflicts must be addressed. Again, as described in the global study, while the wars immediately after the Second World War were nationalist wars or political wars based on political ideology, many of today's wars are religious or ethnic in origin. Often the ideologies we see are deeply conservative and reactionary towards women and their rights. The global community needs to address these issues.

Resolution 1325 (2000) is a strong resolution, and we all have an obligation to implement it effectively at both the national and international levels. Denmark has identified a number of 1325 commitments, of which I will mention only a few.

We will focus on promoting women as peacebuilders in Danish-funded programmes in fragile and conflict-affected States. Our military deployments to peacekeeping missions will all receive mandatory training on the role of gender in peace-support operations. We will immediately investigate suspected criminal misconduct during deployments and, when relevant, ensure the prosecution of alleged perpetrators. We will continue to focus on the recruitment of Danish female officers, including police officers, to international missions, including for leadership functions.

The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) contains an excess of excellent proposals for action. Inspired by these, we must ensure that the resolution and its follow-up resolutions are enacted, so let us get to work now.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Albania.

Mr. Nina (Albania): We appreciate the opportunity to take part in this open debate on the review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to assess progress at the global, regional and national levels in implementing the resolution. We also welcome the adoption by consensus yesterday of resolution 2242 (2015), which we were very pleased to co-sponsor.

We would also like to thank the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for the very interesting concept note (S/2015/749, annex) issued in preparation for the debate.

As pointed out in the concept note, we concur with the view that Member States have the primary responsibility to ensure the implementation of the global commitments and obligations in the context of the women and peace and security agenda.

Albania is not a post-conflict country. It has been striving, however, to achieve higher standards in facing new challenges and emerging asymmetric threats on our path to consolidating democracy, peace and security, and respect for human rights.

My Government is convinced that peace and security cannot be achieved without joint efforts by both women and men, given the inextricable links between gender equality and international peace and security.

In implementing resolution 1325 (2000), the Government of Albania identified and focused its efforts on several key objectives that take account of the need to enhance women's leadership; increase the participation of women in political and public decision-making; increase the participation of women in the police and armed forces; and enhance the relevant programmes for professional training on gender issues and violence against women.

Recent legal acts such as those entitled "Protection from Discrimination" and "Military Discipline in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania" provide for appropriate legal and disciplinary measures in cases of sexual harassment, sexual violence and gender-based violence committed by military personnel in discharging their duties. All military structures under the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence have their own gender equality focal point. There are currently nine focal points altogether: seven women and two men.

On the normative framework, the national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), adopted in 2011, provides for enhanced institutional gender capacities, which made it possible, starting that year, for eight women to participate in international peacekeeping operations.

The 2013 directive from the Ministry of Defence provided for gender equality and gender mainstreaming as annual priorities, achieving later that year the

objective of 17.7 per cent representation of women in the armed forces.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), significant threats to global peace and security have emerged, the most prominent of which is the rise of violent extremism. The Balkans Regional Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, held in Tirana on 19 and 20 May 2015, recognized that women are both vulnerable to radicalization and have an important role to play in countering violent extremism.

The Summit further committed to integrating women into efforts to counter violent extremism and underscored the need to work together in the region to better understand the precise nature of violent extremist threats at the local and regional levels, including by promoting research, analysis and information-sharing on the drivers of violent extremism in all of its forms for all segments of society, including women and youth, and on how best to counter those drivers.

Civil society has also played a very important role in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). In recognizing this role, my Government has systematically engaged and supported women's organizations in the implementation of the 1325 agenda. We emphasize in this context the importance of developing and implementing the relevant national strategies and plans of action, in close cooperation with civil society.

In concluding, allow me to underline the need for the Security Council to strengthen its commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda through a more coherent and systematic approach. Let us not forget that resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted following a decade of terrible failures in protecting women, including on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. This fifteenth anniversary of the resolution should mobilize us in addressing key challenges of the women and peace and security agenda, including the lack of consistent implementation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Australia.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2015/716) and yesterday's unanimous adoption of resolution 2242 (2015), which we were very proud to co-sponsor. We were pleased to participate in today's launch of the ground-breaking global study.

While there have been advances since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted, there are areas where the international community is still failing. Women and children continue to suffer disproportionately in conflict and post-conflict countries. Maternal mortality rates are twice as high; education parity has not been achieved; there are record numbers of people forcibly displaced; and rates of violence, including sexual violence, against women are escalating.

Australia is pleased to make a number of pledges today to help address this dire situation.

First, Australia is committing an additional 4 million Australian dollars over three years to the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, bringing our total contribution to 5.5 million Australian dollars. This is in recognition of the fact that more is needed to support the critical role of women's organizations in preventing and resolving conflict, building peace and ensuring relief and recovery.

Secondly, the women and peace and security agenda must be implemented across the military. Accordingly, the Australian Defence Force is deploying more women and increasing their number in senior decision-making roles; has introduced recruitment targets for women in non-traditional roles; and is developing a gender adviser and female engagement team capability. The Australian Defence Force will also provide a technical expert for women and peace and security to UN-Women for five years from 2016.

Our third pledge recognizes that women, girls and women's organizations are vital to promoting gender equality in countering terrorism and violent extremism. We will therefore support new research to be conducted by Monash University in Melbourne on preventing conflict and countering fundamentalism through women's empowerment and civil-society mobilization.

Australia will also support women's organizations in their participation in the regional network of civil-society groups being established as an outcome of the June 2015 Regional Summit to Counter Violent Extremism, held in Sydney.

Fourthly, Australia understands that humanitarian efforts need to do more to prevent and support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. That is why Australia has dedicated specific funding to address sexual and gender- based violence in response to the

Syria crisis: 7 million Australian dollars, as part of our overall commitment of 59 million Australian dollars in the last 12 months.

Finally, Australia is reviewing its national action plan on women and peace and security, and we will use the global study to inform future actions under our plan.

We call on the United Nations system as a whole to respond to the global study's recommendations. Women and peace and security must be considered and implemented as part of the Secretary-General's review of peace operations and the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in addition to this high-level review.

Global leaders have now agreed to the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), recognize the links between development, human rights and peace and security, and are placing gender equality at the heart of these efforts. We must, as a global community, do more to deliver on these promises for women around the world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Uğurluoğlu (Turkey): I would like to express our appreciation to the Spanish presidency for organizing this timely debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Prime Minister Rajoy Brey for his words yesterday of solidarity on and condemnation of the heinous terrorist attack perpetuated in Turkey on 10 October.

The year 2015 is a landmark year for gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda. This year we not only celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, but we also mark the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). Furthermore, the recently adopted Sustainable Development Agenda (General Assembly resolution 70/1) has a Goal dedicated to gender equality. The high-level review conducted on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), along with the review processes carried out vis-à-vis United Nations peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding architecture, has yielded a sound foundation for us to reflect on the international framework for prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, with a strong emphasis on the empowerment of women.

We welcome the continuing attention paid to the women and peace and security agenda at the Security Council and thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2015/716), inter alia, submitting the results of the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Nevertheless, we would also like to stress that some inaccurate references in the global study do not serve the intended purpose of their inclusion, and thus we express reservations on those references, which in fact do not relate to the overall role or influence of women.

Eliminating conflicts and related violence continues to be a great challenge on which the international community is still trying to deliver 70 years after the United Nations was founded. The severe effects of conflict on women and girls in various regions of the world continue to be a significant problem that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, our world is now facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, with a growing influx of displaced populations resulting from protracted conflicts and lack of security and stability, which causes even further difficulties to vulnerable groups, including women and girls.

In the face of these threats, a stronger and more inclusive approach is required. First, strengthening our political will to achieve gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and recognition of their human rights is a necessary step. Secondly, the horrific acts perpetrated against women and girls by terrorist organizations such as Daesh and Boko Haram require a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. Accordingly, eliminating the root causes of conflict is essential. Thirdly, ensuring a comprehensive approach to decision-making and policymaking, peace processes, mediation efforts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, is another important step.

The meaningful participation of women in these processes should be promoted. Therefore, as a case in point, we welcome the establishment of a technical committee on gender equality in the context of the ongoing negotiations in Cyprus. We hope and believe that this committee will contribute to the efforts of the two sides, the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, to find a just and comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem without further delay.

Finally, deepening the gender perspective in the United Nations system's normative and operational frameworks, entities and practices will enhance the effectiveness of United Nations action in responding

to the needs of women and girls, particularly in humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises.

Turkey supports the empowerment and well-being of women and girls in various emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations through its comprehensive development assistance programmes. The projects we carry out in Afghanistan and Somalia, especially in the fields of education and health services, are concrete examples of our efforts to this end. Moreover, Turkey has been a safe refuge for over 2 million Syrians, including women and girls, who had to flee Syria for their lives and has also ensured that cross-border humanitarian assistance reaches millions of people in dire need on the Syrian side of the border, in conformity with its international obligations and in support of the United Nations. We have offered Syrians fleeing a brutal conflict and a regime that targets its own people temporary protection status and enabled them access to Turkish hospitals. So far, more than 66,000 babies have been born in the medical facilities inside the temporary protection centres in Turkey, and more than 200,000 children are enrolled in school.

Turkey makes every effort to provide security and safety to women and girls who have fled from the conflict. Within this scope, multiple initiatives and programmes have been put in place to ensure prevention, participation, protection and education for women and girls. The humanitarian aid programme for eliminating and responding to gender-based violence that we carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund is an example of such initiatives. We strongly believe that women and children have a tremendously important role to play in rebuilding Syria.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Tin (Myanmar): At the outset, my delegation thanks the Spanish presidency for organizing this important open debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2015/716) and the Executive Director of UN-Women and others for their insightful briefings.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam who spoke on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The fifteenth anniversary of the Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000) presents us with the opportunity to review the progress made and strengthen our resolve to address the remaining challenges in alleviating the impact of conflicts on women and girls. As the global study has indicated, the nature of warfare today is changing. Today, conflicts are becoming more complex, and the number of major conflicts has risen drastically. Brutal extremist terrorism has raised its ugly head and become a major threat to global peace and security. Due to their vulnerability, women and children are the first group to bear the brunt of violent conflict. It has therefore become all the more urgent to revitalize our collective efforts to better protect women in conflict.

My delegation commends the United Nations for keeping the issue of protecting women and girls high on its agenda. Much has been done to implement key aspects of the Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000). The creation of such institutions as UN-Women should be counted as examples of very positive progress.

As the debate focuses on translating rhetoric to effective results, my delegation wishes to share some of the steps taken in Myanmar to address the issue at hand. Sexual violence is a crime strongly abhorred by our traditional values and strictly forbidden by law and the culture of Myanmar. As such, severe legal action is taken against perpetrators of all reported cases, be they civilians or members of security forces. The penal code strongly prescribes severe penalties for committing sexual violence. We have put in place a strong legal foundation for punishing violent sexual crimes. Military personnel are given in-house training to ensure compliance with the Military Act, codes of conduct and relevant civil laws. Violent sexual crimes are condemned — and not condoned — by law and practice in Myanmar.

As a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Myanmar has taken a series of steps to eliminate discrimination and violence against women in accordance with the Convention. Institutions set up to oversee the issue of women have been established. A 10-year national strategic plan for the advancement of women (2013-2023), which includes measures to address violence against women, is being implemented. Another significant step taken was the 5 June 2014 adoption by the Government of Myanmar of the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, initiated by the United Kingdom. It reflects our renewed commitment to joining the international community in advocating on this issue.

Over the past four and a half years, the reforms in Myanmar have promoted democratic values and opened up society, creating greater political and media freedom. They have given civil society and international organizations greater opportunities to work more actively and closely with Government institutions and local communities in protecting women. Our newfound media freedom has also had an impact on the people as a whole, through its creation of a better environment in which anyone can file a report without fear about any wrongful act in which rights are abused. With the cooperation of the United Nations, the Government has taken steps to raise public awareness about the importance of gender equality and the protection of women. In October 2013, Myanmar organized an open day on women and peace and security to mark the anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The event promoted greater awareness of this landmark resolution among the people, Government officials and parliamentarians.

In Myanmar, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are now able to actively participate in activities aimed at preventing violence against women, including conducting surveys and research in order to obtain reliable data that can facilitate measures against sexual violence. We have organized seminars on violence against women across the country. We are also working with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund and NGOs to implement projects that include improving female victims' access to justice and developing mechanisms within communities to respond to acts of sexual violence. In another bold step, the Government, in cooperation with the United Nations, has been working hard to enact a law combating violence against women that is now in its final drafting stage. We hope that once it is enacted, this important legislation will contribute significantly to enhancing the protection of women and girls against violence.

At the regional level, Myanmar is also working with ASEAN member States to protect the rights of women within the framework of ASEAN's Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.

As my delegation has frequently said, the best way to end violence against women in situations of armed conflict is to end those conflicts. Myanmar firmly believes that without peace and reconciliation we cannot build a developed and democratic society. We are therefore making sincere and serious efforts to end the conflict that has plagued our country for more than six decades, and we are making unprecedented progress, since almost all our armed ethnic groups have been agreed on the draft text of our nationwide ceasefire agreement since 31 March 2014. Tomorrow the agreement will be signed by the Government and those armed ethnic groups that are ready to do so. It will mark not only a milestone in our history but also a watershed in our peacebuilding process and in our efforts to create an environment conducive to eliminating the violent impact of conflict on our people. We hope that the ensuing political dialogue will encourage more women to participate in the process. The needs of vulnerable groups, including women and children, must also be given special consideration.

In our universal condemnation of acts of violence against women, we must be sure not to encourage exploitation of this emotive issue as a tool for one's own political agenda. Myanmar welcomes the efforts of the United Nations to advance the agenda on women and peace and security. In doing so, we believe that the United Nations must work with Member States by taking a cooperative approach in assisting them with national capacity-building and helping them to effectively address the gaps and challenges remaining in their policies.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month and on arranging this open debate on the issue of women and peace and security.

Today, I proudly recollect our sweet memory of the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), during the Bangladesh's presidency of the Council, when we worked to improve justice, ensuring that rape was listed as a crime against humanity under Bangladesh's 1973 International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, leading the drive for a zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse in United Nations peacekeeping, and nurturing a culture of peace. This was the first resolution on social issues that incorporated a broad narrative for victims of violence, trauma, stigmatization and rape, as well as the illegitimate children of rape victims.

The main pillars of resolution 1325 (2000) are ensuring women's increased participation in decision-making; their involvement in mechanisms aimed at preventing, managing and resolving conflicts; their engagement in peace negotiations and their mainstreaming into peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, with an emphasis on training and raising awareness about sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Fifteen years later, many credible reports state that violence against women and girls is on the rise. Women and girls continue to suffer most as victims of conflicts, while they generally do not benefit from the dividends of peace processes. Women and girls are viewed as bearers of cultural and ethnic identities and thus become prime targets for the perpetrators of violence. The onus therefore lies on us to ensure that the oppression of women and girls, particularly through gender-related acts, is stopped forever.

It is our firm conviction that our deliberations today will result in concrete proposals and specific guidelines that will have an important bearing on our continued implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We are all aware that poverty, deprivation, marginalization, discrimination, socioeconomic injustices and, even more importantly, the politics of subjugation and supremacy lie at the heart of conflicts and violence, and that women, unfortunately, are always at the receiving end of the consequences of such social inequities, political games and exhibitions of leadership ego. I therefore call on my colleagues to make specific proposals and propose concrete measures that will require us to take stock, nationally and internationally, of ways to end violence against women and the proliferation of the conflicts that may haunt us all, create uncertainty and chaos and have the potential to sweep away our achievements and our sense of stability and security.

We recognize that empowering women means ensuring that they command resources and a leadership capability adequate to efficient management of those resources. We therefore emphasize the importance of meeting women's economic needs and engaging them at all levels and in all forms of the decision-making process. The former can be achieved by ensuring women's access to and participation in areas related to income generation and entrepreneurship, such as microfinancing, education, vocational training and public health; the latter through their engagement in positions of influence, and particularly, for example, in senior United Nations positions, including those at the level of assistant secretary-general, under-secretary-general, special representative and so forth.

For a proper understanding of the issues, and sensitivity to cultural, ethnic and religious needs, recruits from countries of the South should be considered for such positions. Secondly, for effective coordination with staff working in the field, we should ensure that troop- and police-contributing countries are fairly represented, as has previously been discussed in the General Assembly.

The principal responsibility for protecting women falls within the purview of national Governments. Any action taken by the international community must therefore be consistent with national policies, guidelines and action plans. In that context, I deem it a privilege to make a few remarks concerning women's empowerment based on my national perspective.

The education of girls is a vehicle for their advancement, and the Government of Bangladesh has therefore waived tuition fees for female students up to grade 12. By providing women with improved health care, the child mortality rate at birth has been reduced by 72 per cent and the maternal mortality rate by two-thirds. Women have also been provided with a door-to-door family-planning service, which continues to guide women on sexual and various social issues, including converting one's house into a farm by producing household vegetables and poultry, and on other family welfare social benefits. It was envisaged as a development package.

The Government is implementing a number of projects to develop women's capabilities. They include a vulnerable group development programme, collateral-free loans, micro-credit, skills training, including computer skills, product display centres, and so on. Women registered for a vulnerable group development programme and hired for rural works receive skills training and credit, or some simple capital machinery, such as a sewing machine, so that they can set up their own small enterprise. Many affirmative actions have been taken that help women in distress and old age. In order to include women in decision-making, the Government has adopted a quota system for women in the national legislative assembly and in the recruitment process of all civil and police services.

To assist women in distress, the Government has established one-stop crisis cells in 40 districts and one-stop crisis centres in all divisional medical college hospitals. The Government has also set up a DNA-profiling lab and a national trauma counseling centre.

In the legal field, several laws have been enacted to protect women. This includes the Domestic Violence Act, 2010; the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Rules, 2013; and DNA Rules, 2014. A draft is being prepared to enact a child marriage control act. We have also enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980. I note that, in order to implement the Prevention of Oppression against Women and Children Act, 2000, a Women and Children Oppression Prevention Tribunal has been set up in each district so that cases can be tried rapidly.

Today, women occupy the top political leadership in Bangladesh. Our Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Parliament, Deputy Leader of the House, Minister of Agriculture, the State Minister for Women and Children Affairs are all female leaders. In addition, the leader of the opposition is also a woman. More importantly, for the quarter-century since 1991, both leaders of the House and the opposition have been women. In addition, there is a silent and comprehensive women's empowerment ongoing throughout the country, especially in the rural areas. Nearby 14,000 women have been elected in local elections and the female participation rate in the labour market has jumped from 7 per cent to 36 per cent. They are becoming economically independent and the surge is helping them to be empowered and engaged in nation-building.

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equality of men and women within the broad framework of non-discrimination on the grounds of religion, race or gender. The father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder of sovereign Bangladesh, grounded gender equality in the basic principles of democracy.

With regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, we take pride in our modest contribution of troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Our policy decision to recruit women in police and military amply demonstrates our commitment to women's empowerment nationally and in the United Nations maintenance of peace and security. We are pleased that we have deployed two full contingents of an all-female formed police unit to Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am pleased to inform the Council that our all-male troop contingents are fully briefed on the gender issue. The good news is that none of our peacekeepers have been involved in sexual exploitation and abuse.

We place special emphasis on promoting and supporting women's active and meaningful participation in all peace processes, as well as on their representation in formal and informal decision-making; improving partnerships and networking with local and international groups working in the field; and recruiting and appointing women to senior positions. We commit to putting forward as many female candidates as we can in the future to serve the international community under the United Nations system.

In conclusion, I would reiterate that we have made our best efforts to ensure women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of life. We know that much more needs to be done. We are open to replicate any good practices in our national policy, and we are ready to suitably share our experience with others. I hope that the Council's deliberations will help develop specific proposals, a clear message and concrete suggestions that would demonstrate its commitment to women's empowerment and challenge us all to achieve our goals of gender parity and women's engagement to create a peaceful world for all of us.

Almost 95 years ago, our national poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, wrote that whatever great or benevolent achievements there are in the world, half of them were by women, the other half by man. Therefore, we must be fully engaged for the good of humankind.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their briefings to no more than four minutes so that the Council can carry out its work efficiently.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, at the outset I am pleased to express our appreciation to you for dedicating this open debate to the women and peace and security agenda. I also welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/716), as well as the global study on the implementation of 1325 (2000).

My country accords special attention to gender issues, as reflected in our actions leading to the adoption and implementation of a number of plans and strategies,

including a women's strategy for the period 2003-2027, a national strategy to combat violence against women, a national policy to empower women, and a national plan for the advancement of women. The Government has also established a unit to combat violence against women and an independent human rights commission, in conformity with the Paris Principles. Women chair both the unit and the commission.

The Government has focused its attention on preventing violence against women, particularly in the camps for internally displaced persons in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and the human rights division of the United Nations country team in my country. The Government has directed the Prosecutor-General for Darfur to investifate all alleged violations committed since the eruption of the conflict in 2003, particularly those relating to women and children.

Women have been basic partners in the parliamentary and presidential elections in terms of voting and preparation. They occupy 30 per cent of the elected seats in Parliament. Women have held the vice-presidency and chaired a number of main parliamentary committees. Since the early 1950s, women have been guaranteed the vote and appointments to Government posts. With regard to participation in political life, women have run for the post of President. Currently, they occupy important leadership positions, including as advisers to the President, ministers at the state and federal levels, leadership positions on women-related issues and heads of other Government agencies.

In order to avert the dangers of human trafficking to which women and children are subject, and given the fact that the Sudan is a transit State through its outlying desert, my Government has enacted a national law on human trafficking, especially in relation to women and children. In October, my capital hosted a regional conference to combat human trafficking in the Horn of Africa that was well attended by United Nations, international and regional representatives, who adopted and issued the Khartoum Declaration on the African Union-Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants. It is our hope that the United Nations and the international community will assist in the implementation of the Khartoum Declaration by providing financial support to the States of the region. My Government has also signed a number of treaties concerning protection of its borders with neighbouring States.

With regard to achieving economic empowerment, the Government has established programmes to promote rural women's development, including in the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). It has undertaken projects aimed at women's economic empowerment, such as a revolving fund and a career programme for women. In the informal sector, it has established microfunding projects, in view of the fact that men's share of property and inheritance often exceeds that of women.

Regarding the basic services, evidence and indicators reveal that the number of girls enrolled in higher education exceeds that of boys. Women have access to health care services in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF; consequently, maternal and child mortality rates have declined.

We continue to make substantial efforts to deliver assistance and basic services to IDPs affected by conflict in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. While there is not enough time to enumerate all such assistance, those efforts have been fruitful. However, they have also been hamprered by the intransigence of rebel movements that continue to impede the delivery of assistance to areas under their control.

My Government, in cooperation with neighbouring States, is striving to promote the voluntary return of its refugees and restore IDPs to their villages. In line with resolution 1325 (2000), I call for the adoption of a comprehensive approach to addressing issues of women and peace and security, taking into consideration the need to end conflict by prioritizing and assisting reconstruction, the repatriation of IDPs and assistance to affected States in addressing all matters related to that important dossier.

All restrictions that continue to impede national efforts, such as imposed deadlines and unilateral sanctions, must be lifted. With regard to reporting, I call for the need to verify the accuracy of information, which must be shared with the Government of the concerned State before it is incorporated into reports.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Roopnarine (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to contribute to this open debate on the historic 15-year review of resolution 1325 (2000) on the women and peace and security agenda. It is

symbolic that this 15-year commemoration is taking place only three days after the global observance of the International Day of the Girl Child. It is also noteworthy that a few weeks ago the international community adopted the most comprehensive universal agenda for sustainable development.

We, the States Members of the Organization, bear the responsibility for implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, which mirrors the subject of this debate — gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the goal of gender equality. For us, the empowerment of women is an integral part of national development, as well as an essential pillar in the maintenance of sustainable peace.

Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In 2010, my country introduced, and since then has been the main sponsor of the first General Assembly resolution on women's participation at the decision-making level in matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Since its introduction, the resolution has received the support of a majority of Member States. It was formulated in the context of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

General Assembly resolution 69/61 seeks to highlight women not merely as victims of violence, but as empowered and indispensable actors in decision-making efforts to address the issue of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Trinidad and Tobago is pleased that the language contained in that resolution is reflective of the Arms Trade Treaty and its provisions on gender-based violence or violence against women and girls.

At the national level, the equal rights of women and men are guaranteed under the Constitution of my country. The national policy on gender and development is the overarching framework that guides the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in promoting the full and equal participation of women and men in the national development process. Equal opportunities exist for women's participation at the decision-making level in matters regarding peace and security. It is underscored by the ascendancy of women to the senior ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the three contingents of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

At the regional level, we have worked with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on initiatives to strengthen the participatory role played by Latin American and Caribbean women in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We have also hosted a number of initiatives in conjunction with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, to provide disarmament and arms-control training to security personnel, including women.

My country pledges its commitment to continue to work with the United Nations in advancing and empowering women at the global level. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago has submitted its candidature for the Executive Board of UN-Women for the period 2017-2019, during elections to take place within the Economic and Social Council in 2016. We kindly request the support of the members of ECOSOC for that important candidature.

Finally, Trinidad and Tobago takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the advancement and empowerment of women. We reiterate our commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and look forward to the next 15-year review.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I, too, wish to thank you, Mr. President, for putting this matter before the Council and for being a champion of this issue throughout the year. As a country that co-sponsored resolution 2242 (2015), which was adopted yesterday, we are fully committed to being engaged with the matter.

I also would like to thank the Secretary-General and the other high-level briefers for their briefings of yesterday.

We strongly believe that women's rights and gender equality are not only a human rights topic, but also an important peace and security issue. Although maintaining international peace and security is central to our Organization and especially for the Council, today we face far too often situations when the fundamental norms of international, humanitarian and human rights law, as well as other universally recognized principles, are blatantly abused. Georgia condemns in the strongest terms, all cases of violations of women's rights and

discrimination, both in wartime and in peacetime, whether committed by State or non-State actors.

Despite the broad understanding of the nature of the problem and the numerous efforts made at all levels to address them, we have yet to see tangible progress on the ground. Women and girls continue to fall victim to acts of violence, murder, maiming and arbitrary detention committed by parties to conflicts across the globe. Boko Haram's abduction of hundreds of women and girls in Chibok and the kidnappings in Syria and Iraq committed by Daesh and other terrorist groups are glaring examples of the types of gross violations to which women in armed conflict are subjected. The areas controlled by non-State actors and terrorist groups, as well as territories under illegal foreign military occupation, are zones of grave risk for women, with imminent threats to their lives posed by actors that operate in total denial of internationally recognized legal norms.

We need to act adequately and make use of all United Nations tools and mechanisms to respond to the existing challenges. We need to embark on a elaborative, holistic approach, but at the same time remain sensitive to nuance and detail. We need to address women's rights at the international and regional levels but simultaneously remain focused on individual countries.

As we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, Georgia has its own story to share with the international community. By adopting a national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2012-2015, Georgia became one of 49 countries to have a separate policy document devoted to this important issue. The Government of Georgia plans to renew the aforementioned action plan in the very near future. Moreover, 2015 has been declared the Year of Women in Georgia, as we remain committed to robust actions to reform our domestic gender legislation, including by undertaking a number of legislative changes and introducing new laws, which are in line with international standards and fully correspond to our commitments. In that regard, the adoption of an anti-discrimination law was an important, milestone achievement.

In 2013, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a domestic violence action plan for 2013-2015, followed by a national action plan on gender equality for 2014-2016, in compliance with the Council of Europe's gender equality strategy for the same years. The plan is aimed at combating gender stereotypes and violence against women and guaranteeing equal access to justice. In addition, Georgia recently signed the the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and we plan to ratify it in the very near future.

As this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, I would like to reiterate Georgia's strong commitment to the advancement of women. Recently, alongside 87 Member States, Georgia committed to further improving gender equality for the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

As an illustration of our strong commitment to the advancement of women, in collaboration with the United Nations and the European Union, on 9 and 10 November we plan to organize an international high-level conference on meeting gender equality challenges and opportunities in the European Neighbourhood Policy in Tbilisi, Georgia. We believe that the empowerment of women stands at the centre of sustainable development. In that regard, we once again welcome the stand-alone and cross-cutting gender equality Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly 70/1), adopted at the Sustainable Development Summit last month.

Unfortunately, the human rights situation, in general, and the situation with regard to women's and children's rights and gender equality in particular, remain a serious challenge in the Georgian territories that are under illegal Russian military occupation. Specifically, women in the occupied regions continue to suffer grave violations of their fundamental rights and freedoms, such as the freedom of movement, the right to education in their native language and other political, economic, civil, social and cultural rights to which they are entitled under the Constitution of Georgia, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international mechanisms. The humanitarian situation in the occupied territories requires immediate attention, especially since no international organization has been allowed to monitor the human rights situation there. We therefore call on the Russian Federation once again to abide by the August 2008 ceasefire agreement.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my gratitude to United Nations agencies, especially to UN-Women, for their invaluable assistance in the process of the empowerment of women in my country. Alongside other United Nations Member States, Georgia once again reiterates its commitment to further promoting gender equality and the enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by all women.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I take this opportunity to congratulate Spain on its initiative to convene this important open debate on women and peace and security, marking the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

The Security Council's engagement with the issues of women and peace and security has greatly contributed to our common efforts to improving the lives of women in conflict situations around the world. The resolutions adopted by the Council have created a comprehensive body of norms and stimulated progress on the protection and promotion of women's rights. Resolution 1325 (2000) was the first document of the Security Council that reflected in detail the impact of conflicts on women during armed conflicts and in their aftermath, and in particular on the important issue of ensuring the equal participation of women in peace processes and their protection from the devastating consequences of armed conflicts. In the context of armed conflict, parties must respect their obligations under international, humanitarian and human rights law to protect civilians, especially women and girls. The continued practice of using gender-based violence as a tactic of war is both legally and morally unacceptable.

As we have stated on a number of occasions, wrongs that have been left unpunished or unrecognized may impede progress in achieving long-awaited peace and reconciliation. Such wrongs can also play a key role in the eruption of new conflicts and the commission of new crimes. Our consistent focus on that particular aspect of the problem is based on my country's experience in addressing the tragic humanitarian consequences of the war unleashed against it, including mass atrocities committed by armed enemy forces, forced population displacement in Azerbaijan and the continuing military occupation of its territories.

Azerbaijan reiterates its strong condemnation of all acts of sexual violence committed against women and girls in situations of armed conflict. There can be no tolerance for such acts, and all necessary measures must be taken to bring the perpetrators to justice and to put an end to impunity. The scourge of sexual violence in armed conflict has rightly been the subject of the Council's attention.

Unfortunately, not all grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including acts of sexual violence, have received the attention they deserve or a response at the international and regional levels. Measures that are more resolute and targeted are required to end impunity in such situations. Commitments to protection must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches and preferences.

While addressing different aspects of the women and peace and security agenda, it is necessary to recognize the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction. We are called upon to focus on the importance of furthering the equal rights of women and their right to equal participation in decision-making.

Essential work is being carried out for the reintegration of internally displaced women into society and the promotion of their participation in political, economic and public life in Azerbaijan. Recently Azerbaijan launched a regional project on the theme "Women for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the South Caucasus", aimed at strengthening advocacy work for an increased role of Azerbaijani women in decision-making in conflict prevention and resolution at the national, regional and international levels.

Azerbaijan remains committed to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and is proud to have made a contribution to the work of the Security Council during its presidency in October 2013, including the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013). In accordance with that resolution, an informative and comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/716) has been issued recently. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), presented yesterday, is a fundamental piece of research that deserves our high commendation and attention.

We look forward to participating in further deliberations and activities on this extraordinarily important topic in order to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda established by the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I congratulate the Spanish presidency of the Council on having organized this important open debate on women and peace and security, marking the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Tunisia is pleased to participate in this debate and takes this opportunity to reaffirm its support for the objectives set out in resolution 1325 (2000), which my country is proud to have co-sponsored.

The adoption of this resolution constitutes a major step. It addresses not only the impact of armed conflict on women and the importance of their active participation in the peace process, but it also highlights the disproportionate violence they suffer in armed conflicts.

We are pleased to see today a growing awareness of the multifaceted discrimination against women in conflict, an awareness that has resulted in significant efforts to address it. In our opinion, it is important that women, who, together with children and the elderly, are the first victims of armed conflict, be given a leading role in maintaining and consolidating peace and, even more urgent, in preventive processes, which also deserve special attention.

Significant progress has been achieved in that regard since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), such as the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the creation of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, the list of shame and the deployment of advisers and experts responsible for the protection of women in peacekeeping missions. We also have at our disposal a more robust normative framework for women and peace and security, which is further bolstered by resolution 2242 (2015), which the Council adopted yesterday and which we co-sponsored.

Other measures have been taken to improve the implementation of the resolution at the level of the regional organizations to which we belong, including the elaboration by the League of Arab States of a regional strategy on women and peace and security and the launch of a five-year programme, in 2014, by the African Union Commission, entitled "Gender, Peace and Security". However, it must be noted that, despite the progress achieved, much remains to be done to achieve the objectives set out in the agenda on women and peace and security. Therefore, we believe that the Security Council must remain seized of this matter and take the necessary steps to ensure the protection of women and their full and effective participation in the various stages of the peace process.

That is all the more urgent in the context of the emergence of new unconventional conflicts and the expansion of their zone of impact, conflicts which are related to the proliferation of terrorism and violent extremism, where women are deliberately targeted and their fundamental rights — indeed their rights, full stop — are violated. In that respect, Tunisia strongly supports the incorporation of the issue of women's rights violations, including sexual violence, under the criteria triggering the imposition of targeted sanctions. We also believe that all national stakeholders, including civil society, should be able to actively contribute to the promotion of the peace process, as a State can only lay a solid foundation for a lasting peace with the involvement and support of all its citizens.

Our own national experience, which has made dialogue, compromise and the active participation of civil society the modus operandi of crisis management, has enabled us to avoid any detrimental drift of our democratic transition process. This approach of the Tunisian national dialogue quartet, led by the permanent institutions of Tunisian civil society, was recently awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in 2015. That Prize honours my country and commends the various components of our civil society.

As mentioned in the global study on the impact of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, civil society is a key partner in post-conflict situations and can contribute significantly to strengthening early warning mechanisms, thereby making it possible to anticipate an escalation of violence against women and to raise awareness initiatives in that regard. That is why it is important to further mobilize support for the efforts of civil society organizations in conflict and post-conflict situations. There is also a need to maintain a sustained dialogue with civil society organizations in thematic debates and in the deliberations concerning specific countries.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that my country remains available to the United Nations for any action within the framework of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and other international instruments aimed at consolidating women's full participation in the

decision-making process and enshrining a culture of respect for women's rights.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Vukašinović (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. Many important anniversaries converge in the year 2015, creating critical momentum and presenting us with a unique opportunity to push harder, strive even farther and achieve far more than we had envisioned for the next 15 years. This meeting comes at a decisive juncture in our year-long assessment of past actions, implementation gaps, good practices and overall accomplishments, where re-evaluating the progress made is of vital importance and the reinforcement of our dedication to the implementation of the set goals is as crucial as ever.

Fifteen years ago the Council not only recognized the urgent need to address the devastating impact conflicts have on women and girls around the world, but also the importance of the inclusion of wider gender components in the peace and security agenda. It was an official acknowledgment of women's right to participate in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding and to be included in decision-making bodies at all levels of governance.

The Council followed up its action on this front with number of subsequent resolutions that build upon international and national historic commitments to women's rights and gender equality, requiring a level of commitment to their full implementation from all major stakeholders. Responsibility, however, lies primarily with Member States to integrate resolution 1325 (2000) and other women and peace and security resolutions into regional and national policies and programmes to ensure that their implementation is coherent, sustainable and results-oriented.

At this moment, the need for stronger and more complete implementation of the parameters of resolution 1325 (2000) and guidelines is disturbingly evident in long-lasting, ongoing and even newly emerged conflict around the world. It is becoming more and more apparent that the vision and agenda of resolution 1325 (2000) needs to be constantly built and improved upon, as even the substantial framework we have created has been continuously confronted with new and ever-more challenging risk factors, deteriorating humanitarian situations in the wake of conflicts, persistent disrespect and disregard for women's rights in a number of countries and the continued violence against their person, both physical and emotional.

It requires our continuous vigilance, with a sharper focus on prevention and mechanisms that place human rights at the core of the security, protection, political, humanitarian, peacebuilding and socioeconomic development work and agenda. What we note with alarm, as pointed out in this year's annual report (S/2015/716) of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, that key findings of the global study, the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the report (S/2015/490) of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture all identify blatant violations of human rights and humanitarian law, complex drivers of conflict, the involvement of a growing number of non-State armed actors and new technologies and transnational connections, which are changing the nature of warfare.

It is for those reasons that we welcome the high-level review and the global study on the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000), as it further underscores the importance of gender equality, the human rights of women and girls and empowerment being systematically integrated into all discussions and future actions. Furthermore, we hope it will provide for strong and meaningful impetus for transforming efforts into viable actions on the ground, where it matters most.

We are particularly pleased that Bosnia and Herzegovina contributed constructively to the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and that regional consultations with the Balkan countries, including their experiences, challenges and recommendations, have been considered critical to charting the way towards a future commitment to the women and peace and security agenda.

For Bosnia and Herzegovina, gender equality and the empowerment of women remain a priority, both at the national and international levels. We have created a solid legal and institutional framework for the advancement of gender equality, in which the State requires affirmative measures aimed at realizing gender equality. Both the national gender action plan for the period 2013-2017 and the system-wide action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) for the period 2014-2017 define priority measures for improvements and advancement in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for

Action and the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1). That framework has been further strengthened with the adoption of the framework strategy for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, with the sole purpose of providing for consistent, high-quality and effective implementation of that Convention in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We realize that much more remains to be done in a number of identified key areas of concern, through a stronger commitment translated into concrete action. For that reason, allow me to recall the commitments undertaken by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Global Leaders Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, held in September. There must be prompt implementation of the Framework Strategy for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which addresses three main priority areas of concern, namely, the greater inclusion of women and the reduction of women's segregation in the labour market, the prevention of domestic violence and, finally, support for the women victims of sexual violence in conflict. Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to achieving those objectives in our joint efforts for the full realization of the women and peace and security agenda.

Finally, allow me to commend the dedication of three extraordinary women who have been at the forefront of women's empowerment and equality: Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the lead author of the global study, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and former Special Rapporteur on violence against women. We thank them for their ongoing tireless work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): I commend the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and to acknowledge the contributions of the Executive Director of UN-Women and the other representatives.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was a landmark resolution that rightly focused on the differing impact of armed conflict on women and girls and their exclusion from conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. There is undoubtedly an inextricable link between gender inequality and international peace and security.

Sri Lanka has emerged from a 30-year conflict that left deep-seated scars in our society and torn apart the socioeconomic fabric of our nation. Women were major victims of that conflict. A new President and Government were elected in January, committed to democratic values and to Sri Lanka moving forward as an engaged member of the international community. We have already begun taking steps aimed at achieving meaningful reconciliation, strengthening democratic institutions, good governance, the rule of law and confidence-building among communities affected by conflict for many years. We have renewed our commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Historically, Sri Lanka has made strides in the area of women's empowerment. Universal adult franchise was introduced in Sri Lanka in 1931. Free education for both boys and girls and free health care were introduced very early after independence in 1948. Sri Lanka adopted a women's charter two years before the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. And we have in place a national action plan on women, which is currently being updated.

Yet we know that more remains to be done. Sri Lanka takes very seriously and as a matter of urgent priority the responsibility of ensuring the promotion and protection of the rights of women, including with regard to conflict-related sexual violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. Sri Lanka's new Government has demonstrated the political will not merely to make international commitment statements, but also to make time-bound national commitments with a view to their speedy and effective implementation.

We are aware that the long drawn-out conflict has resulted in a large number of victims — orphans, war widows, single mothers and female-headed households. We are committed to addressing their immediate concerns and making them participants in all areas of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Successful peacebuilding requires gender equality and women's empowerment, security, human rights and development

to mesh together. Financial stability is also an important factor in that regard.

It is also vital that we engage domestic actors from the grass roots to the highest echelons of Government to ensure ownership of the peacebuilding processes and to guarantee long-term sustainability. In all those endeavours, we are committed to including women as essential participants in the conversation. That can be done only by acknowledging the existence of structural institutionalized gender bias, identifying the problems and sincerely seeking solutions.

For over five decades, Sri Lanka has been making modest contributions to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Sri Lanka acknowledges the importance of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We are committed to purposefully including women at all levels of those processes, including at the decision-making and policymaking stages. We are equally committed to including our highly trained and disciplined female forces in peacekeeping efforts.

We welcome the formal launch today of the publication of the global study on women and peace and security. We congratulate the contributors and experts and the lead author, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. We will closely review the recommendations in the global study to further the shared goal of women remaining at the centre of the peace process.

I wish to assure the Council that as we proceed with our reconciliation and peacebuilding process with the active participation of women at all levels, we will continue to share our experiences and best practices, especially in relation to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liberia.

Ms. Kamara (Liberia): My delegation commends the Government of Spain for convening this high-level review on women and peace and security, which coincides with the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). We were privileged to have had the presence of the President of Spain yesterday and to hear insightful briefings by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the three women representatives of civil society organizations. We have been enriched by their testimony.

Just 15 years ago, when the Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), Liberia was embroiled in civil conflict. Our journey to peace bears testimony to the vital contribution of women to peace, security and conflict resolution. The positive impact of the presence of Liberian women at the negotiations in 2003, which led to the comprehensive peace agreement in Liberia, is well documented and requires no further elaboration. Suffice it to say, the Government of Liberia continues to provide opportunities for women to participate in ongoing processes of peacebuilding and peace consolidation.

Based on our national experience, we embraced resolution 1325 (2000) and set out to apply it within our domestic context. In 2009, Liberia was the first country in Africa to complete the formulation of its five-year national action plan to give meaning to the resolution. The plan was developed as the framework to drive the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level. It rests upon four pillars, namely, protection, prevention, participation and empowerment and promotion.

Working in collaboration with UN-Women and other United Nations agencies, as well as bilateral partners and civil society organizations, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the resolution in Liberia. Such progress includes the creation of a civil society observatory on resolution 1325 (2000) and the establishment of the Angie Brooks International Centre for training women in leadership, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. A Special Criminal Court E was established in Monrovia in 2008 for the adjudication of cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Under a joint programme of the Government of Liberia and the United Nations, psychosocial, medical and economic support is being provided for survivors of rape and sexual and gender-based violence offenses.

The economic empowerment of women and adolescent girls continues to be supported through microcredit, agricultural schemes and training iin business and life skills. To complement the active participation of women at the national level, the Government has integrated a gender perspective into the decentralization process, which will open up opportunities for women to serve in leadership positions at subnational and local levels. Clearly, much has been achieved, but so much more needs to be done. Many challenges persist, and are impediments to the resolution's successful implementation in Liberia. Foremost among them are inadequate financial

resources, lack of capacity, a weak justice system and poor coordination among the relevant stakeholders.

As we move towards achieving inclusive development, through which we hope that women will enjoy full participation across every sector, the Government of Liberia will undertake the following measures before the end of the current Administration.

First, in order to strengthen women's protection, the Government will ensure the passage into law of the draft domestic violence act, which was endorsed by the Liberian Cabinet on 15 June and which is currently under consideration by the Liberia National Legislature.

Secondly, the Government commits to ensuring that the outcome of the ongoing constitutional review process will guarantee and institutionalize women's full and equal participation in governance and national affairs.

Thirdly, to improve women's access to justice throughout the country, the Government commits to working with the judiciary to initiate the decentralization of Criminal Court E to all counties of the country, so that rural-based sexual and gender-based violence survivors may have recourse.

Fourthly, the Government commits to implement its decision to establish gender units within each ministry and agency of the Government.

The Government of Liberia resolves to increase its allocation in the national budget to support the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) across the country, with the aim of reinforcing economic empowerment programmes and expanding their coverage for the benefit of women and girls in rural areas. That is critical for the achievement of the objectives of our national agenda for transformation.

Finally, the Government, through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and in collaboration with partners, is conducting a review of the national action plan to develop a bridging strategy to address gaps in implementation. The Government has also embarked upon the revitalization of the resolution 1325 (2000) secretariat through the recruitment, retention and training of staff and the provision of funding.

As this is a critical time in Liberia's recovery process from the Ebola health crisis, we count on the continuing support of international partners to translate those commitments into reality. We express special recognition and gratitude to UN-Women for the steadfast and consistent support it has provided to our gender equality initiatives. We believe that resolution 2242 (2015), adopted yesterday and which we were privileged to co-sponsor, offers a new framework as well as new opportunities for global collaboration to achieve the goals of the women and peace and security agenda. Liberia commits to remain engaged.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland): Allow me first to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this high-level meeting on an issue that is of central importance to the maintenance of peace and security, namely, the central role of women. Allow me also to express my Government's appreciation for the initiative launched by the Secretary-General in the form of the global study and for the work carried out on that study.

Resolution 1325 (2000) recognized that women and girls are affected differently by conflict. At the same time, they have a vital contribution to make to the achievement of sustainable peace. The brutal conflicts that have emerged in recent years have magnified the already considerable challenges faced by women and girls. Indeed, rape and sexual abuse have become ever more common as weapons of choice in war. And denigration or denial of women's rights is not only a by-product of conflict but now a war aim among some non-State actors, such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Many good proposals have emerged from the global study. We strongly agree with the assessment that it is necessary to move from an ad hoc approach to implementation to establishing more structure. Useful concrete proposals include designating sexual violence as a criterion for sanctions and establishing an informal expert group under the Security Council to ensure that there is information and monitoring. Including gender experts in all sanctions expert groups would strengthen implementation. All United Nations Special Envoy teams should include women in high-level positions.

Financing is of course key. We have heard proposals that at least 15 per cent of peacekeeping funding should be directed towards the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000). From our point of view, 15 per cent should be seen as an absolute floor, not the ceiling. As to Iceland, over 20 per cent of our contributions

towards peacebuilding in 2014 had gender equality and women's empowerment as their primary objective. That is a level we intend to maintain over the coming years, along with ensuring that other contributions strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in a significant way. In that respect, 71 per cent of Iceland's total contributions towards peacebuilding in 2014 had gender equality and women's empowerment as the primary, or at least a significant, objective.

Iceland deploys civilian experts to the field through the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit. In 2011, after several years' effort, we achieved gender balance, where an equal number of experts of each gender were seconded to the field for an equal amount of time. We are on track to maintaining that balance. Before deployment, all seconded personnel receive education on gender equality and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In 2008, Iceland adopted its first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Following a review in 2012, a second national action plan was adopted. A third action plan will be ready next year. That shows that implementation is indeed a continuous work-in-progress.

Needless to say, the Security Council must be the centre of the push for effective implementation. It needs to be more active and to show political will in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). I would like to pay tribute to those delegations on the Council that have pushed this issue forward.

Finally, having put the spotlight on the role of the Security Council, it is vital that other organizations involved in peacekeeping and conflict zones also ensure implementation. Examples would be NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the African Union. The full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will require the efforts of all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Montenegro.

Mr. Perović (Montenegro): Montenegro is pleased to contribute to this important open debate and warmly thanks Spain for this initiative and for providing a platform for our deliberations. I also warmly thank today's briefers for their valuable contributions.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Some progress has been achieved over the past 15 years in the global efforts to protect women from violence and to promote the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict, and in the construction of stable and just societies. Today we need to consider which practical steps should be taken in order to translate into reality our commitments on this vital agenda.

Montenegro welcomes the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/716), which demonstrates that attention to the issue of women and peace and security is increasing across the board. We also welcome today's resolution 2242 (2015), which confirms the determination of States to make further efforts in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The issue of women and peace and security poses a challenging task. Armed conflicts often affect women and children more negatively than they do men. They lose access to basic services and to education and economic opportunities, and, increasingly, they are subjected to sexual violence. The harsh reality is that, in many conflict areas today, it is more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier.

Women's voices are distinctively underrepresented on issues that concern them, including armed conflicts as one of the most critical challenges that they are facing today. Because women do not get a chance to make their views known, the needs, interests and views of half of the world's population are not taken into account.

The potential of women to facilitate the process of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is often unrealized, thus undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of peace initiatives. Experience shows that female experts can provide additional lines of communication to local communities that are not open to male soldiers. They help in building trust and confidence, and they can draw attention to the specific needs of women and girls, including for basic services and health and education.

We should regard women as assets, not victims. It is crucial to involve women in peacebuilding processes as stakeholders and decision-makers. Women must be part of the process; that will allow them to gain ownership of the policies that affect them and all of us.

Changing deeply rooted cultural beliefs is a difficult task. It takes constant advocacy, education

and awareness-raising, and should be coupled with the application of monitoring systems that force people and institutions to be aware of their own biases against women in leadership. We should renew our efforts to ensure that in every country and every community, girls and women are valued equally with boys and men. They should be given the same opportunities to grow and learn, participate and be protected from violence.

Montenegro strongly believes that women must be leaders and key participants in political decision-making and in the prevention and resolution of and recovery from conflict. Promoting gender equality and tackling violence against women, both at home and internationally, is a priority of the Montenegrin Government. We believe that where women live free of violence, have equal access to education, health care and political and economic opportunities, societies are healthier, more prosperous and more peaceful. This is our goal.

We must translate our collective commitments into action, which can result in safer environments for women and girls everywhere. Montenegro welcomes the sustained positive trend shown in the report of the Secretary-General, and we are committed to working with the United Nations system, partners and other countries to implement a reformed women and peace and security agenda and to further improve this trend.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Grant (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada commends Spain for having convened this high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security. In particular, we applaud the adoption of a fittingly ambitious resolution on women and peace and security (resolution 2242 (2015)), which Canada was proud to co-sponsor.

Enhancing the empowerment of women and girls, respect for their human rights and dignity and the promotion of their well-being have long been priority issues in Canadian foreign policy. We see these as elements critical to realizing safe and secure communities, development and prosperity.

Resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent seven resolutions that compose the women and peace and security agenda highlight how emergency and conflict situations seriously exacerbate threats to the human rights, dignity and welfare of women and girls, and the vital role of the meaningful participation of women and girls in furthering international peace and security.

(*spoke in English*)

Women around the world continue to face an onslaught of violence in situations of conflict, as we have witnessed in the deliberate and systematic campaign of sexual violence undertaken by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram. While these groups publicize their crimes, such atrocities also take place in other conflicts behind a curtain of silence and shame. Accountability, let alone true justice, remains elusive. Women's rights defenders, serving as a voice for the voiceless, are themselves often targeted. The United Nations itself has witnessed shortcomings, with instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and staff.

In response to these situations, Canada supports projects to address the specific needs of women and girls in conflicts and emergencies. We are mounting a strong response to sexual violence in conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Iraq and Syria. Our programming includes providing access to justice for survivors and holding perpetrators to account, including through the deployment of Justice Rapid Response experts. This work is undertaken within the context of Canada's national action plan on women and peace and security.

Canada remains a staunch supporter of the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, whose courage and tenacity have been an inspiration to us all. We are proud to be providing $3 million in support of her Office over the next three years, recognizing that financing is key to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

As we reflect on the past 15 years, the ravages of war, displacement and violent extremism should only push us to redouble our resolve. Canada pledges to be relentless in our pursuit of peace, justice and prosperity for women worldwide.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Rwanda.

Mrs. Byaje (Rwanda): I join others in thanking the Kingdom of Spain for having organized this important high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) on the occasion of its fifteenth anniversary. The choice of this specific topic demonstrates Spain's continued

leadership and commitment to the protection and promotion of women's and girls' rights in conflict and post-conflict situations and, more importantly, of its eagerness to move beyond rhetoric to concrete action.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General and Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, all of the high-level Government officials, the members of the Security Council and the members of civil society for their contribution to this debate.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), as well as that of subsequent resolutions, was instrumental in raising our awareness as to the human rights abuses that women and girls are subjected to in armed conflict as well as in settings where insecurity prevails. The current geopolitical landscape in major parts of the world where violent conflicts are raging, coupled with the rise of extremism and terrorism, has worsened the situation and given way to unprecedented, hard-to-contain humanitarian crises in which women are particular targets. They not only suffer all sorts of ill treatment, including rape and sexual violence, but they are also denied their rights and are routinely scorned and abused.

This reality became self-evident for Rwandans when violence reached its peak for the 250,000 rape victims in the genocide against the Tutsi who were left completely shattered and scarred for life. Nevertheless, if there is any silver lining beyond these despicable crimes against humanity, we can say that the lessons learned from the genocide against the Tutsi were instrumental in paving the way for the positive narratives experienced in Rwanda with regard to women's empowerment and the advancement of their status.

Their key role in mending the social fabric in the immediate aftermath of genocide and in promoting peace, unity and reconciliation not only enabled the resurgence of peace and socioeconomic development but also contributed a great deal to the rebuilding of a shattered nation. Today in Rwanda women have taken centre stage in sensitizing for peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes run by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. They are also highly involved beyond our borders in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, making the nexus between gender equality and international peace and security an inescapable reality.

In addition, although it is believed that no country can fully reach gender equality, Rwanda, driven by strong leadership and unfailing political will to improve the status of women, took some ground-breaking initiatives in the form of commitments that will lead to tackling this ambitious goal. Indeed, enormous strides have already been taken, ranging from breaking the world record for the highest female representation in a Parliament — at 64 per cent currently — and in other organs, such as the 43 per cent in the Cabinet and nearly 50 per cent in the judiciary, but also in recognizing women as critical actors in prevention, mediation, protection, conflict management and resolution, as well as in reconciliation processes.

Other than the existing political will enabling a favourable policy climate and a gender-sensitive Constitution that respects the principle of gender inclusion, Rwanda now has a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) that was launched in May 2010 by the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion and which sought to strengthen the capacity of women in peace and security processes. In addition, determined to end the scourge of violence against women and girls — the worst assaults to human dignity — Rwanda has adopted a range of policies to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, protect them and severely punish gender-based violence offenders.

At the institutional level, Rwanda's security organs, in collaboration with other Government agencies, local communities and civil society, have launched initiatives to protect and respond to violence that targets women and girls. The one-stop centres, which are shelters run by the national police, offer, inter alia, a wide range of free services for victims of gender-based violence, as do gender desks nationwide — in police stations, army posts and offices of the national prosecution agency — which have been set up to offer gender-sensitive services to victims.

In the international arena, Rwanda is among the leading police-contributing countries for female police and correctional officers in United Nations peace-support and peacekeeping missions. These officers actively contribute to combating and raising awareness on violence against women in the communities they serve. Similarly, during the 2015 peacekeeping summit, Rwanda pledged, inter alia, to deploy an all-women police unit in the United Nations peacekeeping apparatus. Currently, we have 198 female officers; next week 33 more will be deployed to the Central African Republic.

I would like to conclude by noting that this landmark year of the triple review of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding together with the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) will continue spur action worldwide in fulfilling the imperative to better protect women, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. Rwanda has already embarked on that irreversible path and is committed to developing a holistic approach to conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding, mainly by ensuring the active participation by and protection of women.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): I would like to thank Spain for its initiative in launching this high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Portugal welcomes and greatly appreciates the open debate format, which has allowed States — members and non-members of the Security Council alike — and representatives of United Nations institutions and civil society to participate in this renewed opportunity to further advance the women and peace and security agenda.

From the outset, Portugal has been a strong and consistent supporter of the women and peace and security agenda in order to address the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and enhance their participation in peace processes. We were therefore very pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2242 (2015), adopted by the Council yesterday.

In 2009, Portugal adopted its first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and a second edition of the plan for 2014-2018 was approved last year. During our term in the Security Council in 2011-2012, the women and peace and security agenda ranked high among our priorities. We were then and remain now firm supporters of mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda in all Security Council resolutions, as we are very convinced that women should be involved in all aspects of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict processes. We also joined other Security Council members in organizing Arria Formula meetings whose purpose was to give voice to women's organizations and raise awareness among Security Council members on women's specific needs in conflict-affected settings.

As a current member of the Human Rights Council, Portugal is deeply committed to addressing the plight of women and girls affected by armed conflict. The achievements over the last 15 years are significant and should be duly acknowledged and very much welcomed, as the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) indicates. Nevertheless, as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/716) also highlights, obstacles remain and worrying trends have emerged. This reality requires and deserves a renewed, shared commitment to the women and peace and security agenda.

In that regard, and to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Portugal commits to promoting increased participation by women in international missions for the strengthening and maintenance of peace and security, and for humanitarian aid and crisis management; to continuing to actively promote the women and peace and security agenda in the main multilateral forums to which Portugal is a party, such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO; to raising awareness in all the relevant international forums of the importance of establishing national actions plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000); to providing information for the United Nations indicators in order to track the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and for relevant documents on the implementation of the resolution; to conducting training programmes on gender equality and violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings, for national personnel in the field of justice and for members of the armed and security forces assigned to international peacekeeping missions; to including the women and peace and security agenda in Portuguese development aid programmes; and, finally, to continuing to engage with civil society organizations on women and peace and security agenda issues.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Deghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Spanish presidency of the Council for convening this open debate. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General and to UN-Women for their valuable contributions to the discussion of women and peace and security.

Fifteen years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), focusing on the specific effects of armed conflict on women, the positive role that women can play in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the indissoluble links between the empowerment of women and international peace and security.

Women are a key resource for promoting peace and stability. Research has shown that women's participation and inclusion make humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthen the protection of civilians, contribute to the political settlement of disputes and the maintenance of sustainable peace, and accelerate economic recovery. Today, we find ourselves at a turning point in the cause of women and girls. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, all remind us that there is a strong, direct relationship between sustainable peace and security and sustainable development, and that women and girls must be at the forefront of programmes designed to encourage development, peace and security.

Conflicts in recent years, especially in the Middle East, have assumed new and abhorrent forms and dimensions, and constitute an unprecedented challenge to stability in our region. In some parts of the region, women are grappling with the scourge of terrorism and extremist violence. The spread of violent extremism and takfiri ideology threatens the lives and rights of women and girls in our region in an unprecedented way. News accounts and other reports in the past few years have shown that women and girls have suffered the most at the hands of extremists and terrorists and have been targets for systematic sexual violence, slavery and rape. The international community should make it clear at every step of the way that there will never be leniency for those who subject women and girls to such inhumane acts of violence, physical and mental.

At the same time, it is already evident that this dangerous ideology and its consequences cannot be contained in a single region and in one way or another can easily affect other regions near and far. It is very unfortunate that women and girls have also been disproportionately victimized by bombings in Yemen and violence in Syria and elsewhere. Iran strongly condemns the barbaric acts of terrorist and violent extremist groups and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including women and children. We support the Secretary-General's commitment to preparing and presenting his promised plan of action to prevent violent extremism and his intention to cite the participation, leadership and empowerment of women as key factors in addressing the drivers of extremist violence.

In closing, I would like to stress that my delegation believes that organizing a debate such as this in the Council should not undermine the work of the United Nations bodies that are most relevant to the consideration of women-related issues, that is, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): Armenia would like to express its appreciation to the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for initiating this open debate and providing an excellent concept note on the subject (S/2015/749, annex). We also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their valuable contributions yesterday.

The year 2015 has been a symbolic one for the international community, starting as it did with the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (Beijing+20), followed in September by the General Assembly's adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), in which gender equality is embedded as a stand-alone development goal, and now amplified by the marking of the fifteenth anniversary of the resolution 1325 (2000). It is evident that empowering women and promoting their active participation in all spheres of public life are priorities on the current international agenda.

Armenia has always been at the forefront of the promotion and protection of women's rights. With regard to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we would like to emphasize the importance of implementing confidence-building measures, including people-to-people contacts. We should also recognize the links between resolution 1325 (2000) and other international instruments concerning gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform and Plan of Action. This year, Armenia has prepared and submitted to the relevant

bodies of the United Nations two important documents, our national review for Beijing+20 and our fifth and sixth joint periodic reports on CEDAW. They give a detailed analysis of our country's implementation of its commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

At the same time, and touching on the resolution's comprehensive coverage of the issues, we should stress that Armenia has already implemented or is in the process of implementing many of its components in the area of gender security, including through two national action plans: a strategic action plan for the period 2011-2015 to combat gender-based violence, and an anti-trafficking plan, our fourth for the period 2013-2015.

As far as the international aspects of our national plan are concerned, we have to face certain realities and challenges on the ground. Twenty-one years after the conclusion of the trilateral ceasefire agreement that ended the active military phase of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the physical security and survival of the people of Nagorno Karabakh is still under threat. By the same token, the civilians residing in Armenia's border territory have been systematically and indiscriminately targeted by Azerbaijani armed forces. Armenia strongly condemns these violations of international humanitarian law and the tragedy that occurred at the end of September, in which three women in Armenian border settlements were killed.

Armenia has always advocated for confidence-building measures relating to the situation of women living across dividing lines, particularly in areas of conflict. Unfortunately, we have not able to exploit the great potential of such trust-building, given the position of Azerbaijan on the issue. The imprisonment of Azerbaijani peace and human rights activists involved in international projects, including Leyla Yunus, continues to be an insurmountable impediment to full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Armenia remains committed to addressing the issues of women and peace and security in line with the aspirations of the people of Armenia and its international obligations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to respond to the statement made by the representative of Georgia, while assuring the Council that in view of the lateness of the hour I will be brief.

We of course reject the accusations made against us. We have repeatedly stated our position on the issue and I will not do so again here. As I understood it, the representative of Georgia expressed concerns about the situation of women in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In that regard, we would like to propose inviting to one of our meetings on the topic under discussion representatives of women's non-governmental organizations from those republics, who could provide us with full and first-hand information on the true situation in that area.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Azerbaijan has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Rahimova (Azerbaijan): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor to respond to the statement made by the delegation of Armenia.

Armenia's statement was full of distortions and misinterpretations, which we utterly reject. It is yet another attempt by Armenia to mislead the international community, divert attention from its responsibility arising from the occupation, mass atrocities and other policies it pursues in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that, on 1 September 2015, Armenian forces, from their position in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, opened fire and, with full precision, they targeted a wedding ceremony in Gapanly village in Terter district. Three civilians, including one child, were wounded. The direct deliberate targeting of civilians is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law by Armenia, which continues to commit war crimes under international criminal law. Unfortunately, that is not a new phenomenon.

During the ongoing aggression against Azerbaijan, Armenia has committed numerous crimes, including indiscriminate attacks against, and killing of, civilians, hostage taking and detention, inhumane treatment, execution, the capture of war prisoners, taking of hostages and ethnic cleansing of the occupied territories. The most heinous of them is the massacre of the civilian population of the town of Hodjali, in which 100 persons died, including children, women and

the elderly. Those crimes are not isolated or sporadic acts, but were part of Armenia's deliberate, widespread and systematic policy, its practice of committing atrocities, rooted in ideas of racial superiority, ethnic differentiation and an expansionist policy.

The documents adopted by the international organizations implicitly refer to the crimes committed by Armenia as a blatant breach of international humanitarian law. In 1993, resolution 853 (1993) in particular condemned attacks on civilians and bombardments of inhabited areas, and expressed grave concern at the displacement of large numbers of civilians on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Georgia has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing us to take the floor a second time in response to the statement that was just made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

There is a lot of irony to what the representative of the Russian Federation has just said. The point is that Georgia is a democratic country, an open society with a Government whose leadership changes every term through a democratic process. We have hundreds and hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We have international NGOs operating in Georgia. The Georgian Government and the Georgian State encourage support to those NGOs. We are now talking about the proposal of the Russian Federation, which is not an open society nor a democratic State, and which, in addition to that, exercises effective control over the occupied Georgian territories. It is not only officials who have Russian passports, it is ethnic Russians who run those territories of Georgia — 20 per cent of Georgian territory. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Georgians, citizens of Georgia, have been displaced, have been ethnically cleansed, from those territories. The Russian military has been an instrument behind that displacement.

Of course, we are open to all kinds of discussions. We are open to different forums — Geneva, Tbilisi, New York or other places. At the same time, what we request and what we require from the Russian Federation is to allow the return of the ethnically cleansed population. Again, we are talking about the majority of the pre-war population of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. We are unable to exercise State control on that 20 per cent of our territory for the reasons just cited. Effective control is exercised by Russia, which signed agreements with those regimes that it itself established on Georgian soil. Those agreements envisage full integration. This is akin to annexation, nothing less than annexation.

Georgia stands for a full, peaceful negotiated settlement of the conflict between Georgia and Russia. But we would reiterate once again that, in order to materialize that settlement, Russia has to comply with the agreement it signed with us in August 2008. That agreement excludes any unauthorized military force on Georgian soil. Once again, we call on the Russian Federation to fulfil its obligations under that and other international agreements and to withdraw all its occupying forces from Georgian soil.

I apologize for the lengthy statement, but I think matters have to be clarified from time to time.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Armenia has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): I requested the floor to reply to the comments made by the representative of Azerbaijan.

We reject all allegations made against my country. I regret to note, though, that once again the statement by Azerbaijan on the important topic of women and peace and security fell short of addressing the real situation on the ground related to the violence against women in that country. Instead, comments by the delegation concerned were full of allegations, fabrications and lies against my country. It is well known and properly documented that it was Azerbaijan that, more than two decades ago, unleashed a full-scale war against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, with the intention of totally exterminating its Armenian population. The military aggression by Azerbaijan, however, had unpredictable consequences. As a result of that aggression, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Armenians, the majority women and children, had to abandon their homes and become refugees and internally displaced persons. They suffered unspeakable acts of violence and State terror by Azerbaijan.

That aggression continues to this day. Due to the indiscriminate shelling of Armenian villages by Azerbaijan's heavy artillery, only last month three Armenian women — villagers from the bordering Tavush province of Armenia — were killed. Rather than delivering false statements and utilizing baseless

propaganda, we would strongly advise Azerbaijani representatives to concentrate on monitoring cases of grave human rights violations currently taking place in their country, particularly the widespread violence against women observed by United Nations Special Rapporteurs and other international experts; the persecution of women human-rights defenders and activists and women peace advocates; the occurrence of illegal marriages; gender-related killings of women and girls; a very high rate of gender selective abortions, and so on.

We could pose a very relevant question to the authorities of Azerbaijan. Is it possible to promote the women and peace and security agenda and achieve lasting peace in the conflict when these authorities systematically oppress, jail and attack their own women human-rights activists and peace advocates?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This statement will be even briefer than my last. From the statement given by our colleague from Georgia, I understand that he clearly is worried by the presence of women from Abkhazia and South Ossetia and their participation in any discussion. I would urge him in future not to transcend the bounds of what is proper. The assessments we have heard here are simply not acceptable within the framework of a professional discussion in the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I would like to sincerely thank all delegations for participating in this open debate.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.